

Editorial

From Self-Report to Process: Criterion-Based Approaches to Individual Differences

This volume is the second installment of our Back Volumes Project; an endeavor to reconstruct missing volumes from 2015-2024 when *Individual Differences Research* was not published. Following the approach of our previous volume, Volume 14 includes this framing editorial forward, two curated reprints from journals recently acquired from another publisher, and an original work for this volume.

The three empirical investigations included herein (Gridley & Hoff, 2010/2016; Kelly & Kneipp, 2016; Landry et al., 2005/2016), while diverse in topic, all demonstrate how research on individual differences can move beyond static description and correlations of self-report scales toward more dynamic, process-oriented approaches using the common element of structured comparison. Landry et al., (2005/2016) uses random assignment to test how expressive versus neutral writing affects forgiveness and emotional adjustment. Gridley and Hoff (2010/2016) manipulate linguistic framing to determine how a journalist's description could bias emotional perception in music. Kelly and Kneipp (2016) compare professional writers and student controls to validate a creativity assessment. All three studies utilize an external stimulus or criterion to influence or compare typically self-reported individual differences variables.

This methodological orientation addresses a long-standing limitation in individual differences research: its heavy reliance on correlations of self-report reflections. While self-reports remain valuable, they can conflate subjective interpretation with objective differences, introducing social desirability, misestimations, and interpretive biases (Furr, 2009; Lira et al., 2022; Olino & Klein, 2015). The present studies respond to that concern by embedding self-report within criterion frameworks, thereby linking subjective experience to observable variation or experimentally induced change. In this way, self-report to some extent becomes evidence of psychological process rather than an isolated reflection of introspection.

Conceptually, these studies might be conceptualized as converging on the theme of appraisal and expression: the means by which individuals interpret and communicate psychological experience. The forgiveness study (Landry et al., 2005/2016) demonstrates emotional transformation through structured writing; the framing study (Gridley & Hoff, 2010/2016) illustrates how contextual language alters perceptual judgment; and the creativity criterion group study (Kelly & Kneipp, 2016) identifies enduring dispositional patterns of factors involved in imaginative expression across groups which should hypothetically differ. Together, they connect psychological experiences with stable individual styles, highlighting how symbolic processes such as language and self-description both mirror and shape inner life and can relate to external criteria or events.

The implications are also applied and translational. Expressive writing offers a low-cost pathway to emotional repair and forgiveness; framing research underscores the ethical importance of linguistic context in media and communication; and creativity assessment provides tools for identifying and cultivating talent in educational and occupational settings. Collectively, these contributions exemplify an integrative direction for contemporary psychology; one that unites experimental rigor, measurement validity, and real-

world application. Together, these studies demonstrate how experimental, perceptual, and psychometric methods can jointly advance a meaningful science of individual differences using criterion references.

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